



***United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
YUSILL SCRIBNER,  
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,  
JANICE OH  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**DEA  
ERIN McKENZIE-MULVEY  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 337-2906**

**MAJOR COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRAFFICKER  
EXTRADITED TO THE UNITED STATES**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today the extradition from Colombia to the United States of HEBERT VELOZA GARCIA, a/k/a "Ever Veloza-Garcia," a/k/a "Hernan Hernandez," a/k/a "Cara Polo," a/k/a "HH," on narcotics-trafficking charges.

As alleged in the Indictment originally filed in Manhattan federal court on April 23, 2007, the Government's application to obtain his extradition, and other submissions to the court, VELOZA GARCIA, a leader of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia ("AUC"), a former Colombian right-wing paramilitary and drug-trafficking organization, oversaw the development and exploitation of drug trafficking routes used to ship huge quantities of cocaine from Colombia to the United States, directly and via third countries such as Panama and Mexico.

VELOZA GARCIA, 41, is expected to be arraigned in Manhattan federal court tomorrow morning and is scheduled to appear before United States District Judge GERARD E. LYNCH on March 12, 2009, at 10:45 a.m. VELOZA GARCIA is charged in the Indictment with one count of conspiracy to import five kilograms or more of cocaine into the United States, and one count of importing five kilograms or more of cocaine into the United States. If convicted, VELOZA GARCIA faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. As part of the extradition request, the United States has provided assurances to the government of Colombia that it

will not seek a life sentence for the defendant, but instead will ask for a prison term of years.

Mr. DASSIN praised the investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force -- which includes agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police -- and the DEA's Colombia Offices. Mr. DASSIN expressed his gratitude to the United States Department of Justice Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section's Attaché in Bogota for their involvement in the extradition process.

"The extradition of Hebert Veloza Garcia is another important step in our ongoing effort to bring the world's most significant drug traffickers to justice," said Acting United States Attorney LEV L. DASSIN.

"Hebert Veloza Garcia distributed dangerous narcotics from his hideout in Colombia to the streets of American cities. We are safer today with him behind bars and facing justice that is long-overdue," said DEA Special Agent-in-Charge JOHN P. GILBRIDE.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys and GURUANJAN SAHNI and JOCELYN E. STRAUBER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges and allegations contained in the Indictment and submissions are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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